



# The Ethiopian Herald

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MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

**MoJ completes preparations for five TJ proclamations**

**BY HAILE DEMEKE**

**ADDIS ABABA**-The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has announced the completion of preparations for the implementation of five Transitional Justice (TJ) policy proclamations. These proclamations aim to ensure the rule of law and foster lasting peace and stability within Ethiopia.

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## Ethiopia revolutionizing coffee production with irrigation, technology

**BY BETELHEM BEDLU**

Ethiopia is expanding coffee production with the implementation of modern technology and irrigation system. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) has recently revealed in his social media account that coffee is being produced through irrigation mechanization process by Kerchanshe Trading in West

Guji Gelana District, Oromia State.

The coffee farming, which is performed through irrigation, is expected to produce 60 quintals of coffee per hectare, in which, the Premier highlighted the need to expand the experience to other parts of the country.

With a view to expand such experience to different parts of the country, Haramaya University Coffee Researcher Prof. Wasu

Mohammed told the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that the nation has the potential to produce 45 to 50 quintals of coffee per hectare while having the opportunity to increase the production to 60 quintals through the current irrigation and technology application.

By putting aside the nation's traditional trend of growing coffee on tree (shade) and applying latest

*See Ethiopia revolutionizing... Page 3*

## Christmas brings hope for Lalibela's tourism revival

**BY ESSEYE MENGISTE**

**ADDIS ABABA**- Lalibela City Administration has finalized preparations to celebrate Ethiopian Christmas (*Genna*), which falls on January 7th, according to the Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor Wondmnew Wedaje informed the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) that Lalibela is preparing for a remarkable festival celebration. He emphasized that the city administration is collaborating closely with security agencies and local communities to ensure a peaceful and joyous festival.

To facilitate smooth and successful celebrations, a committee and seven sub-committees have been established. These committees comprise investors, government agencies, religious leaders, elders, and other key stakeholders.

Ethiopian Christmas (*Genna*) holds significant importance for Lalibela, as it



presents a crucial opportunity to revitalize the tourism sector, which has faced challenges in recent times. The festival aims to restore the vital economic contributions that tourism previously provided to the local community.

The Deputy Mayor emphasized that hotel owners, businesses, investors, and other stakeholders can leverage the festive season to revitalize their businesses and contribute to the city administration's

*See Christmas brings... Page 3*

## Utopia project to drive green-led digital economy

**BY ESSEYE MENGISTE**

**ADDIS ABABA** – The Utopia Green Mobility Project aims to significantly boost Ethiopia's green-led digital economy by transitioning to low-cost renewable electricity, saving foreign currency, and creating numerous job opportunities.

Last Wednesday, Utopia Green Mobility held a press release to unveil its innovative electric car financing system and accompanying application, a first-of-its-kind in Ethiopia.

The company's General Manager Adonic Worku emphasized the project's pivotal role in the nation's

*See Utopia project... Page 3*

# ENDC underlines youth's role in nation building process

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** – Proactively responding to the requests of the youth on national matters is vital to achieve the nation building endeavor through inclusive consultations, Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission (ENDC) said.

During youth agenda submission event held last Tuesday organized by Ybuntu-Youth Peace building Alliance and Tamra for Social Development (TSD) in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), ENDC Commissioner, Ambaye Ugato (PhD) expressed that the youth have raised a number of issues such as constitutional amendment, peace and security, job creation, and fair distribution of resources.

The youth also submitted concerns related to distorted narratives, natural resource conservation, the issue of administrative boundaries and identity, sexual harassment, full implementation of the Pretoria agreement and protection of persons with disability and migrants, to be entertained during the National Dialogue.

Ambaye said that the youth participation in the undergoing National Dialogue process that designed to resolve country's multifaceted disparities, would play an indispensable role in ensuring peace and stability through inclusive and transparent



consultations.

According to him, the National Dialogue is the exact solution to resolve the current problems of the country thereby paying due attention to the requests and suggestions of youth would have a manifold advantages.

So far, ENDC has been carrying out dialogue in the various parts of the country with the participation of over 200,000 people. The commission involved the youth to play their part in the consultation process to bring fruitful outcome in promoting patriotic sentiment.

Ybuntu-Youth Peace –building Alliance's Director General, Biruk Yergalem stated that the alliance has been working on awareness raising activities in various states and cities by conducting seven dialogue trainings.

The activities include 12 media campaigns by 52 youth-oriented and youth-led organizations, eight Digital Conversations, and three national trainings for more than 2,000 young people through a Telegram channel, he mentioned.

Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations Council (ECSOC's), Executive Director Terefe Degiti said "Capacitating civil society organizations would play an immense role in bringing holistic development in Ethiopia."

Terefe pointed out that his council and ENDC have signed a memorandum of understanding whilst they have been working hand-in hand for the nation's development and interest. In a similar manner, understanding the agendas of the youth is crucial to achieve the nation building efforts.

## MoTRI urges illicit traders to cease unlawful activities

• *Third Nat'l anti-illicit trade summit convenes*

BY TSEGAYE TILAHUN

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration (MoTRI) has issued a strong warning to those engaged in illicit trade activities, urging them to cease their unlawful operations.

The 3rd National Anti-Illicit Trade Summit, organized by the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association (ECCSA), commenced yesterday with the aim of preventing and mitigating the impact of illicit trade.

In his keynote address, MoTRI Minister Kassahun Kofe (PhD) emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to taking decisive action against illicit traders and contraband operators. He highlighted ongoing efforts to collaborate with stakeholders in implementing stringent measures to curb these activities and sustain the positive outcomes achieved through policy corrections.

Minister Kofe encouraged those involved in illicit trade to transition to the legal trading system by obtaining the necessary licenses and contributing to the nation's economic growth. He revealed that the MoTRI has engaged in extensive public consultations, reaching over 8 million consumers across the country in the past five months.

The Minister underscored that the government will intensify its crackdown on illegal traders. Over the past five months, the Ministry has taken corrective action against 108,000 illegal traders, contributing to a significant decline in inflation, from 29.2% to 19.2%. To further strengthen monitoring and control efforts, MoTRI has finalized a new trade policy and is currently engaging in discussions with relevant stakeholders.

This policy aims to address trade deficits at the macro level and support the implementation of a floating exchange rate. These macroeconomic reforms have already yielded positive results, with gold exports reaching one billion USD in the past five months.

ECCSA Secretary-General Kenenisa Lemi (PhD) emphasized the critical importance of a legal and modern trading system in fostering improved community services, including healthcare, education, and infrastructure development through increased revenue generation. He highlighted that a robust legal framework would significantly contribute to the development of entrepreneurship and technology, reduce trading costs, facilitate global trade value chains, and ensure the rule of law.

Conversely, illicit trade activities have detrimental impacts on job creation, revenue generation, and overall economic prosperity. Since its inception, ECCSA has actively promoted the expansion of a healthy and legal trading system nationwide through awareness campaigns and other initiatives.

"Today's summit aims to facilitate discussions among stakeholders to identify effective solutions for preventing illicit trade activities," stated Lemi. "These discussions will enable us to assess the impacts of illicit trade, particularly in sectors such as livestock, coffee, and pharmaceuticals exports, and develop concrete solutions while emphasizing the crucial role of all stakeholders."

# Ministry establishes Ethiopian translators, interpreters association

BY MESERET BEHAILU

**ADDIS ABABA** - The Ministry of Culture and Sport (MoCS) has announced the establishment of the Association of Ethiopian Translators and Interpreters.

According to information from the Ministry's official page, the Association was founded last Saturday.

Speaking at the launch, MoCS Language Research and Translation Development Expansion Leading Executive Kefyalew Abdisa emphasized his institute's commitment to expanding translation and interpreting professions, creating jobs, and playing a crucial role in the country's holistic development.

Kefyalew highlighted the Ministry's collaboration with higher education institutions to develop skilled translation and interpreting professionals. This includes curriculum development to foster conducive learning environment.

The Organizing Committee of the Founding General Assembly Chairperson Mekonen Bezabih on his part emphasized the growing importance of translation and interpreting in the contemporary world. He underscored their significance in fostering social connections, developing trade, investment,



and tourism.

"While Ethiopia has a long history of translation experts who have significantly contributed to education, research, justice, faith, and technology transfer, their contributions have not been adequately documented or recognized," Mekonen stressed.

He noted that 350 institutions are registered with the Documents Authentication and

Registration Agency. The primary objectives of the Association are to advance sector development and foster collaboration among professionals.

The Founding General Assembly concluded with the election of three members to the Executive Committee of the General Assembly, five members to the Association's Executive Committee, and three members to the Internal Audit Committee, according to *The Ethiopian Herald*.

## Utopia project to...

green economic aspirations.

“Electric vehicles have zero tailpipe emissions, dramatically reducing local air pollution,” he stated during the press conference.”

Worku outlined ambitious targets, aiming to serve 10,000 customers within five years and 60,000 within a decade. Recognizing the financial constraints faced by many, Utopia Green Mobility has introduced a unique car lease payment plan. Unlike conventional financing, this plan offers interest-free payments for up to a year, making electric vehicle ownership accessible to low- and middle-income

individuals.

“By combining long-term payment options with credit solutions from established banks and financial institutions, we empower thousands of residents currently struggling with transportation costs,” explained Worku. “They can save up to 97 Birr per day and become proud owners of private or metered taxi electric cars.”

To ensure consistent lease payments, Utopia Green Mobility will provide customers with a stable income stream through its “Utopia electric meter taxi” service. The company also guarantees long-term warranties, fast charging services, and comprehensive

maintenance and spare parts support.

The project champions environmentally sustainable development. When powered by renewable energy sources like solar and wind, electric vehicles significantly reduce carbon footprints, aligning with Ethiopia’s green development goals.

Adonic Worku announced a strategic agreement with MG Motor, a renowned British automotive brand, to assemble and distribute fourth-generation electric vehicles in Ethiopia. Utopia Green Mobility will serve as the exclusive importer and distributor for both private and taxi use.

Utopia Green Mobility Deputy Manager

Hana Itcha highlighted the innovative digital system developed by a team of local and international experts. This user-friendly application streamlines the entire car financing process while ensuring complete security.

Furthermore, Utopia Green Mobility has partnered with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and Tele Birr to facilitate digital payments, enhancing convenience for customers.

To further amplify its message, Utopia Green Mobility has appointed renowned artist Engdasew Habte as its Brand Ambassador.

## MoJ completes...

The Ethiopian government has initiated a comprehensive TJ process to address past conflicts, provide redress for serious human rights violations, and heal the wounds of the past. This process is crucial for achieving enduring peace and reconciliation within society. The Government of Ethiopia has embarked on this significant national initiative with the primary goals of ensuring justice, accountability, reconciliation, and compensation for victims across the country.

Speaking to the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), Awel Sultan, Head of the Transitional Justice Institutions and Coordinating Leadership Office at the Ministry, stated that various efforts have been made to address human rights violations, internal conflicts, and instances of false discord and

disobedience that have occurred in recent years. The establishment of TJ mechanisms is a key component of the government’s commitment to addressing these issues at the grassroots level.

The MoJ has been entrusted with overseeing the implementation of this TJ process, which aims to address the serious human rights violations that have contributed to instability and disorder in recent years. The Ministry is currently preparing five proclamations to guide this critical endeavor.

The first step in this implementation process involves organizing a team of qualified professionals. The MoJ is actively engaged in various activities, including budgeting and securing the necessary resources to support this critical work. The subsequent

phase will focus on creating a robust legal framework to establish independent institutions that will facilitate the effective implementation of the TJ process.

To spearhead this crucial work, the MoJ has established the position of Special Attorney General Press Secretary. This vital role will be responsible for investigating serious human rights violations, overseeing cases, prosecuting charges, ensuring accountability, making informed decisions, and handling all related matters.

Furthermore, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be established. This independent body will be tasked with gathering comprehensive information on past human rights violations, thoroughly investigating their scope and impact, and

publicly announcing its findings.

Recent years have witnessed numerous human rights violations, creating significant social divisions. The primary objective of this Transitional Justice (TJ) initiative is to foster social harmony and reconciliation. To ensure the success of this endeavor, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has sought input from both local and international experts in developing the five legal frameworks.

The MoJ is actively working to enhance the meaningful involvement of vulnerable communities in the TJ process while developing these frameworks. Recognizing the crucial importance of collaboration, the MoJ is diligently coordinating efforts with all stakeholders to ensure the initiative’s success.

## Ethiopia revolutionizing...

technologies, the country could collect over 60 quintals of coffee per hectare, he said.

The experiences of Brazil and Vietnam showcase how agricultural technology application improved their performances. “This is one of the main reason they have huge production. Not only Brazil but Vietnam, a country with 40 years of experience in coffee production, cultivates better than Ethiopia” Wasu stated.

In order to encourage farmers to apply technology, the country needs to provide them with professionals and technical support. Therefore, a research based support as well as follow up is crucial, according to him.

“We have taken advantage of our resource, coffee. Kenya is currently producing 30 to 40 quintals of coffee per hectare. Ethiopia could perform better with adequate provision of professional and technical support to farmers,” he suggested.

Despite the fact that increasing the production might take at least four years, he stressed the need to execute plans at grass root level to expand the productivity.

Nonetheless, the Professor indicated that the absence of senior professionals that are specialized in the coffee sector might be the major challenge.

“We don’t have experts that are trained in coffee industry. Brazil has coffee professionals training institute. However, there are no trained experts in the country while an expert that is knowledgeable and technically advanced is vital to support Ethiopian farmers,” the Researcher noted.

Absence of timely and adequate provision of essential inputs for farmers is another underlying challenge in the sector, he stressed, noting that the revenue generated from the sector, however, could cover the expense.

Furthermore, he emphasized the need to establish an institution that is determined to increase productivity and conduct timely researches. Accordingly, Wasu emphasized the need to strengthening the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea Authority. Moreover, integrating coffee traders, growers, unions and exporters is crucial while creating better linkage is vital to enhance the sector’s performance.

Ethiopian National Coffee Association President Hussien Ambo (PhD) highlighted the importance of applying latest technologies in coffee farming. Technology is instrumental for farmers through enhancing product and productivity as well as improving quality coffee production.

However, he stressed that expanding technology might be time consuming which should be analyzed whether farmers are capable of executing it or not.

Producing 60 quintals of coffee per hectare through mechanization process requires huge land. Thus, only farmers with adequate land could perform the mechanization process. Companies like Kerchanshe and Horizon could apply the irrigation technology.

Mentioning that the nation collects products from 5.2 million Ethiopian farmers for coffee export purposes, he indicated that coffee farming is conducted irregularly in the nation which needs vast plan, knowledge and technology.

“Not only the farming is irregularly done but it is also performed in small scale lands. This has made it difficult to improve the technology. Hence, it is essential to put utmost efforts starting from land and seed preparation to each process.”

Besides applying knowledge and technology, performing irrigation for coffee production is pivotal to increase coffee productivity. Through adequate performance of coffee irrigation in all parts of the country, the nation could register better performance in only two years, he stressed.

## Christmas brings...

ongoing efforts to reinvigorate tourism.

He noted that approximately 45 hotels are prepared to accommodate guests visiting Lalibela for the holiday. The city administration has taken proactive measures to prevent any unwarranted price increases during the festive period.

The Deputy Mayor assured that security is not a concern for celebrating the festival, stating, “The city is peaceful now. The owners of this holiday are the people themselves. Even if any security challenges arise, local security organs and members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force are well-equipped to address them.”

The Lalibela community eagerly awaits the festival, preparing to welcome guests with traditional hospitality, including the customary foot washing ceremony. They are excited to share their culture and traditions with visitors and celebrate the festive season together.

The Deputy Mayor extended a warm welcome to all Ethiopians and foreigners to celebrate Ethiopian Christmas in Lalibela. He emphasized that visitors will be blessed by experiencing the unique cultural and spiritual significance of the festival.

Furthermore, he highlighted the crucial role of tourism in the local economy. With an anticipated influx of over 1.5 million guests, Lalibela is poised to witness a significant boost in tourism activity during the Christmas season.

# Opinion

## Some effects of inflation, measures concerned bodies ought to take

BY GETACHEW MINAS

Inflation is the general rise in the prices of goods and services produced over time within a country. It has immense impacts on consumers, businesses and investors. It also has effects on the overall economy in a country. Economists are of the opinion that moderate inflation has been enduring in the developed economy for more than a century. They also suggested that it is useful to differentiate between the inherent effects of inflation and those occur when inflation becomes unusually high.

David Floyd, a well-known economist proposed key elements of inflation: it is a continued and broad-based increase in the prices of goods and services through time. It erodes the purchasing power of consumers over time. Economists agree that a small but positive rise in price is economically useful. On the other hand, high inflation feeds on itself and impedes the long-run performance of the economy. During a rise in inflation, some economic sectors outperform others; real estate, energy, and value of stocks have historically performed well during rising inflation. Developing countries, including Ethiopia, are bound to face such impacts of inflation.

It has been observed that bonds and stocks tend to lag since inflation lowers the present value of their future cash flows to investors. This is a risk investors are bound to face. As risk takers, investors have deeper understanding of the various causes and impacts of inflation.

Inflation negatively affects consumers who are bound to lose their purchasing power whenever prices rise. A slight inflation is not a cause of concern; however, it can create serious problems when prices rise very fast. As David Floyd indicated, some of the most common causes of rapid inflation include: an imbalance in the supply and demand for goods and services. Inflation tends to rise when consumers' demand for goods and services is greater than their supply. Also, disruption in supplies and tightening of the market responses causes price to increase. It is underlined that expectation of inflation may lead to rising prices.

Consumers often demand higher wages and salaries to get prepared for future price increases. Workers and trade unions in Ethiopia, for example, may often expect prices to rise and such expectation entails demand for higher wages. Ethiopian producers and enterprises, on the other hand, tend to increase prices to cover increases in wages, and this leads to a rise in inflation which has major impacts on the Ethiopian economy. It erodes the purchasing power of Ethiopian workers or consumers. This is the first and most pervasive or dangerous effect on the economy.

In other words, an overall rise in prices over time negatively affects the purchasing power of consumers due to a fixed income that may cause progressively less consumption. Thus, Ethiopian consumers lose their purchasing power irrespective of whether the inflation rate is low or high. This implies that they generally lose the capacity to buy faster when inflation rises at a higher rate. Ethiopia is not an exception to these economic tendencies. Other African countries have also faced the same economic trends during inflation.

In practice, inflation measures the increase in prices over a period of time for a given basket of commodities. These prices are supposed to represent the overall consumer spending. The consumer price index (CPI) is the best measure and indicator of inflation. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Statistical Service (ESS) is the only authoritative government institution that issues data and information on CPI.

Based on information provided by the ESS, researchers conduct studies on the impacts of inflation on consumers. They conduct studies on the impacts of inflation on low income consumers and these are used by economic policy makers to design strategies for minimizing impacts. Low-income consumers tend to spend a higher share of their incomes on basic necessities. They have lesser means of cushioning against the loss of purchasing power caused by inflation. Thus, policymakers and market participants tend to focus on the causes and effects of core inflation.

Generally, in measuring inflation the prices of food and energy are excluded because they tend to be more volatile and less reflective of trends of longer-term inflation. But low income earners tend to spend a relatively high proportion of their household budget on food and energy. These items are hard to substitute or avoid even when prices rise high. The poor consumers tend to be less likely to possess assets such as real estates or houses which would serve as protection against inflation.

Similarly, recipients of social security benefits or pensioners and other recipients of transfer payments have protection against inflation in the form of annual cost of living adjustments that are based on the CPI for wage earners. This mode of payment is practiced in the developed countries. Cost of living adjustment is difficult to practice in developing countries such as Ethiopia where CPI for hourly wage earners and clerical workers is difficult to apply.

Economists assert that inflation has the capacity to keep deflation at bay. Deflation is reduction of the general level of prices in a given economy. Advanced countries set a target for the rate of inflation over the long run. This allows them to meet their mandates for stable prices and high employment.

They focus on modest inflation rather than fixed prices because a small rate of inflation drives commerce.

Developed countries provide a margin of error in case the inflation rate is overestimated and arrests deflation. It is known that the general decline in prices may be more destabilizing than inflation. This event is also true in the economies of the developing countries, including Ethiopia. In these countries lending banks may charge interest to offset the inflation that may lead to devaluation of repayments. This measure also helps borrowers to service their debts by allowing them to make future repayments with inflated currency. But deflation makes it more expensive to service debt in real terms because incomes would be likely to decline along with prices as we see it today.

Why modest inflation rather than deflation is the model is that wages are sticky or do not decline downward. Workers tend to strongly resist any attempt to cut their wages during an economic depression. Enterprises facing a decline in demand for their products tend to lay off workers as this is the likeliest alternative for them. There is also a positive inflation rate that allows a wage to freeze and serve as a reduction in the cost of labor in real terms. This is the benefit of inflation that provides insurance against deflation.

Deflation is actually a departure from the reality and it may also cause expectations for additional deflation. This situation leads to more spending, decline in income, and defaults in loan repayment. This results in a banking crisis and economic disruptions. Economists warn that economic policy makers in developing countries such as Ethiopia have to follow up inflationary and deflationary situations very closely and take measure in time to keep economic disruptions at bay.

What is unique about inflation is that it feeds on itself when it is high. A small inflation may indicate a healthy economy and it may not arouse high inflation expectations. A small rise in inflation is mostly an indication for enterprises, workers, and consumers to expect inflation to remain at low rate. However, expectations of future inflation will influence a rise in inflation rate that accelerates sharply and remains high. These situations force workers to demand higher wage increases and these expectations cause employers to pass those costs by raising prices on output. This leads further to a wage-price spiral, one causing the other.

Mismanaged policy response to high inflation may lead to hyperinflation, which is a worst situation. A rising expectation of inflation raises annual inflation to a higher level resulting in unemployment and recessions. History of economic development in the developed countries revealed that Inflation during WW I had increased to a level of more than 1.5

trillion times its pre-war levels. Today, the developing countries, including Ethiopia, have to deeply understand the causes, effects and remedies for inflation and deflation before it is too late.

Also, the history of economic development informs economic policy makers that inflation raises interest rates. Governments and central banks have powerful incentive to keep inflation at bay. A familiar approach over the past century has been to manage inflation by using monetary policy. Economists suggest that policymakers may raise the minimum level of interest rate and make borrowing costs higher across the economy. This is done through constraining the money supply when inflation exceeds the target set by the central bank. As a result, inflation and interest rates tend to move in the same direction.

Central banks may raise interest rates as inflation rises or they may risk a pressure of rising price. Economists suggest that inflation may lower debt service/repayment costs. But, new borrowers are likely to face higher interest rates when inflation rises, but those with fixed rate mortgages and other loans get the benefit of repaying these with inflated money. In other words, this lowers their debt service costs after adjusting for inflation.

Economists assert that inflation raises growth and employment in the short run. Higher inflation may lead to faster economic growth in the short term. However, in the long run, very high inflation discourages saving because it erodes the purchasing power of persons who saved over time. This situation may encourage consumers to spend and enterprises to invest. In these circumstances, unemployment may initially decline as inflation rises as a result. This confirms the concept of the "inverse correlation between unemployment and inflation." Higher inflation may spur demand while lowering costs of labor, generating employment.

Persistent high inflation may eventually come in the form of painful expectations. The result is, therefore, chronic economic underperformance. Inflation also results in painful recessions. The problem with the trade-off between inflation and unemployment is that higher inflation caused by higher wages (which reduce demand for labor) can lead to further inflation or stagflation. Stagflation is the simultaneous appearance in an economy of "slow growth, high unemployment, and rising prices." It is, therefore, advisable that the concerned policy makers in Ethiopia take the right measure to control the effects of inflation in time.

**Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald**

# Editorial

## Ethiopia, Djibouti reinvigorate all round ties

Weeks after Djiboutian Minister of Foreign Affairs Visited Ethiopia, his Ethiopian counterpart has made a reciprocal visit to Djibouti which was a successful feat in further cementing the all-round ties of the two countries.

During his visit to Djibouti, Foreign Affairs Minister Gideon Timothios (PhD) has held discussions with Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh, and his counterpart.

Indeed, the two sides deserve due credit for such unreserved effort to uphold the bilateral ties. Ethiopia and Djibouti must further strengthen their bilateral talks at all levels as there are many areas to continuously improve the social, economic and political interactions.

Especially, the Foreign Affairs Minister and his delegations visit to the Doraleh Port Facility in Djibouti is worthwhile as it highlights the bottom line issue in the bilateral ties of the two countries to enhance trade through speeding up the flow of import export items.

Accordingly, the two sides have focused on how the ongoing cargo transportation and logistics services can be enhanced through the joint efforts of the two countries.

The Ethiopian delegation held discussions on enhancing Djibouti's port services, expanding fuel terminal capacity, completing the construction of the Dikhil-Galafi road, and improving the overall efficiency of cargo transportation and import-export processes.

The Ethiopian delegation held discussions on enhancing Djibouti's port services, expanding fuel terminal capacity, completing the construction of the Dikhil-Galafi road, and improving the overall efficiency of cargo transportation and import-export processes.

Ethiopia has so far been working strenuously to upgrade the situation of the road and railway connection to the port which will reduce transport time, enhance road safety, save fuel and maintenance costs, and reduce pollution. The upgrading works are crucial for Ethiopia's economic growth and social development, as it will improve the efficiency and capacity of this crucial trade route.

Other project benefits include enhancing Ethiopia's trade competitiveness by improving logistics efficiency through regulatory and institutional reforms, investments in logistics facilities, and building the government's capacity to facilitate the modal shift to railways.

In this regard, the two countries have to further undertake more efforts to enhance institutional efficiency, alleviate operational hurdles so that the people of the two countries can harness the best benefit out of the economic activities.

Ethiopia is running a macro economic reform that is showing results in improving the performance of the economy, and other major drawbacks that are hindering its growth.

The rapid growth of Ethiopia's economy benefits not only itself but also neighboring countries especially Djibouti which maintains strong economic ties.

As countries of Africa are working on regional integration, Ethiopia and Djibouti should also champion the economic integration in the region. As the two countries already enjoy strong infrastructure connection, they can facilitate stronger and better trade and investment ties that can give more benefit to their respective peoples.

In summary, it is imperative for Ethiopia and Djibouti to deepen their collaborative efforts in safeguarding the peace and security of the Horn of Africa. The persistent threat of terrorism, particularly from anti-peace groups such as Al-Shabaab, poses significant risks to both nations and necessitates a united front to combat these dangers effectively. Gedion emphasized Ethiopia's steadfast commitment to promoting stability in the region, underscoring the nation's unwavering resolve. This commitment not only reflects Ethiopia's dedication to its own national security but also highlights the importance of regional cooperation in addressing shared challenges. By fostering stronger ties and coordinating their strategies, Ethiopia and Djibouti can enhance their resilience against extremist threats and contribute to a more secure and peaceful environment for all their citizens.

# Opinion

## How Ethiopians can make the best out of the planned national dialogue

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

National dialogues are becoming gradually prevalent tool for conflict resolution and political transformation throughout the world. National dialogues have been proposed or carried out in a diverse group of countries and circumstances.

I personally agree with the United States' Institute of Peace which noted in 2015 that broadening the debate about a country's trajectory beyond the usual group of elite decision makers. National dialogues offer the potential for meaningful conversation about the underlying drivers of conflict and ways to holistically address these issues with care not to be deliberately misused by leaders seeking to further consolidate their grip on power.

In the case of Ethiopia, the ongoing national dialogue plays critical role in overcoming Ethiopia's historical and current challenges. It essentially facilitates tackling political and social challenges through sustainable solutions.

The previous Ethiopian narratives have not seriously considered the need for a deliberative process where citizens can persuade and convince one another to arrive at a shared political, social and economic contract for the nation. There have been many armed forces to take power and exploit the natural resources as to their wills.

However, the government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) did right by establishing the National Dialogue Commission, designed to be an open platform where the public can directly articulate their concerns and aspirations for the future of Ethiopia.

As to my observation, the process so far is inclusive since it has been allowing for broad participation from ordinary citizens, which is a departure from traditional approaches that often prioritized elite-driven solutions. All the society segments: youth, women, elders, community leaders (including Abbaa Gadas, edir leaders) political parties (except few), scholars, influential persons, government representatives and civic societies in the areas where agendas have been collected so far. This inclusion enhances grassroots participation.

I hope for a future where Ethiopians reach consensus on their national identity and build a strong and inclusive nation where one is not prior to the other general affairs of Ethiopia. It would enhance transitional justice in which may be all agree and reconstruct their shared national patriots and history destroying the unaccepted once with the neglected boundaries.

It may also facilitate democratic institutions with true multinational federalism for

a lasting social contract, and equal opportunities for all citizens.

Ethiopia's unique historical trajectory marked by indigenous state formation but lacking a strong foundational social contract, has contributed to its current political struggles which the national dialogue process must address. The historical grievances need to be addressed in order to bring about sustainable peace and foster a culture of dialogue and compromise instead of raising arms for rights.

To achieve all these, Ethiopia needs to further work on inclusion, transparency and public participation, a far-reaching agenda, a credible convener, appropriate and clear rules of procedure, and an implementation plan.

It is also important to temper the current enthusiasm for the national dialogue with a critical analysis of the necessary conditions for its success.

There should also be a clear understanding on what National Dialogues can realistically achieve, as well as clearly embedding them in larger transition processes.

The sense of ownership also matters a lot. Genuine engagement of the main stakeholders, broad consultations and an inclusive preparatory mechanism fosters legitimacy and ownership of the dialogue. National actors should be at the driving seat as far as the design and implementation of the National Dialogue process is concerned.

It should also take into account the interest of a broad range of stakeholders, and avoid any sort of hijacking in the entire process.

As well, as it is done so far, there must be clear mandate and objective. It is important to be clear what the process is supposed to achieve (and what it is not). This informs adequate process design and supports expectation management.

In addition, selecting the right chairs in all the processes is necessary as it is an important signal about the sincerity of the process in effecting the outcome and helps to generate legitimacy.

Going slow is important to go fast; everything cannot be done quickly to last longer.

At last, its outcomes: both intangible (relationship building, civic education, etc.) and tangible (political and constitutional change, etc.) need to be managed with care. The proper implementation of tangible outcomes is as important as the process for reaching them. National Dialogues are self-organized and self-facilitated processes based on a set of principles that ideally continue to take effect beyond the closing ceremony. Therefore, as it is solely the national affair of Ethiopians, no single external entity should get a loop hole to interfere or inculcate interest.

**Editor's Note: The views entertained in this article do not necessarily reflect the stance of The Ethiopian Herald**



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# Business & Economy

## Macroeconomic reform: A catalyst for sustainable development

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

There is widespread agreement that the effectuation of the macroeconomic reforms has jump-started flexing its wings in a winning manner and resolving major predicaments revolving around foreign exchange with success.

As things stand at present, the federal government's unflinching stance to resolve major challenges on gross national debt, inflation, foreign currency deficiency, and other related aspects has been moving forward in the right direction.

In the aftermath of the wide-ranging macroeconomic reform, multifaceted concrete results have been registered over and over again. At this moment in time, the country's exchange rate has been moving forward in an appropriate manner more than ever before. If truth be told, the aforementioned reality in black and white demonstrates the positive moves of the reform in taking the country to the next level of accomplishment at the earliest possible juncture.

In actual fact, the implementation of the reform has been smoothing the path of the country's foreign exchange reserves in a successful and triumphant fashion. This shows that the reform has been playing a part in catapulting the country's economy to a whole new level and new horizons.

It is expected that the macroeconomic reform becomes involved in fashioning economic integration among the Horn of Africa and beyond.

The Ministry of Industry has recently stated that macroeconomic reforms implemented by the Ethiopian government since July have successfully addressed key bottlenecks in the manufacturing sector.

Industry State Minister, Hasan Muhumed Moalin, told ENA that the reforms have, for example, alleviated the long-standing foreign currency shortage that previously hindered manufacturers' ability to import essential inputs, spare parts, and machinery.

It should be recalled that the ministry recently organized a public-private dialogue aimed at addressing challenges and seizing opportunities to unlock the potential of the manufacturing sector.

"We had a public-private dialogue focused on our economy, led by the private sector, which plays a crucial role," Hasan said. "Therefore, it is important to understand the problems, challenges, and opportunities arising from the macroeconomic reforms. In this context, foreign exchange was a major constraint for the manufacturing sector, limiting the importation of spare parts, inputs, and machinery. However, the macroeconomic reform has completely resolved this issue."

To support manufacturers, the government has addressed foreign currency constraints, improved access to finance and electricity, and prioritized financial services for the manufacturing sector, said the State Minister.

The government has also included the manufacturing sector in its national development plan, alongside other key sectors, recognizing its crucial role in domestic consumption, export growth, import substitution, and overall economic development.



The Ethiopian government has been providing policy support to the manufacturing sector, with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed establishing a National Council led by Girma Biru.

This council brings together various stakeholders to address sector-specific challenges and seize opportunities. Regular discussions are held to resolve challenges and capitalize on potential opportunities.

As part of the efforts, manufacturers across Ethiopia have been identified, categorized by scale and sector, to better understand their capabilities and provide appropriate support.

The promising strides being registered in major segments of the country have been yielding results and pointing forward in the right direction tackling key logjams in various sectors. Other than that the macroeconomic reforms have been successfully addressing key bottlenecks. This being the case, Ethiopia has been going in the right direction.

As things stand at present, the country has jumpstarted ensuring a wide range of macroeconomic reform assisting the economic sector to become wide-ranging and competitive.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced in the recent past that Ethiopia has embarked on full implementation of macroeconomic reform policy, according to information obtained from a source.

In a macroeconomic reform program policy statement issued recently, Prime Minister Abiy elaborated that the government has been implementing numerous economic reforms to address longstanding structural problems, including debt burden, inflation, unemployment, and low productivity following the political change which ushered in 2018.

The first phase of the Home-Grown Economic Reform Program (HGER 1.0), introduced in 2019, included policy ideas from macro-financial to structural and sectorial, Abiy pointed out.

Through HGER 1.0, Ethiopia has achieved significant economic objectives, correcting imbalances, alleviating debt, and expanding growth sources, despite remaining reform areas.

Ethiopia has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, achieving an average GDP growth rate of 7.1% from 2019 to 2023, he said.

Consequently, the premier added that Ethiopia has become a significant player in the African

economy and demonstrated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, building the largest economy in East Africa and the third-largest in sub-Saharan Africa.

The policy statement detailed the key pillars of the Homegrown Economic Reform Program (HGER 2.0), the second phase of the country's economic transformation efforts including establishing a modern macroeconomic policy framework to ensure stability and resilience as well as boosting competitiveness by improving the investment and trade environment, expanding productive capacity and productivity across sectors, enhancing public sector capabilities for efficient service delivery.

Apart from smoothing the path of economic sustainability and development, the recent macro-economic reform has been bringing about significant influence in tackling challenges revolving around the private sector.

As effectuating the macroeconomic reform gives rise to continuous development and assures comprehensive benefits for the population as a whole, pertinent bodies should stand in unison to break down barriers and remove any obstacles in implementing the reform.

In the same way, putting the macroeconomic reform policy into practice has been preparing the way for societal progress, ameliorating poverty, and more of the same. As the new policy plays a paramount role in smoothing the path of the country's economy and attracting investors from various parts of the world, each and every one should move heaven and earth for the realization of the desired goal of the reform.

The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) is gearing up for a more competitive banking landscape as Ethiopia prepares to welcome foreign banks, Bank's President Abe Sano said.

The recent enactment of the Banking Business Proclamation by the House of Peoples' Representatives paves the way for opening the banking sector to foreign investment.

This proclamation establishes a legal framework enabling foreign banks and investors to participate in the sector and contribute to the nation's continued economic growth.

The bill is designed to ensure adequate financial resources and bolster foreign currency reserves, modernize the banking sector through advanced knowledge and

technology, strengthen its integration with the global market, and enhance its overall competitiveness and efficiency.

In anticipation of this new landscape, the CBE has undertaken necessary preparations to compete effectively with foreign banks entering the Ethiopian banking sector.

As President Abe Sano explained to a local media, the bank has prioritized enhancing its capital base, modernizing its technological infrastructure, and streamlining its operational systems to compete with established international banks.

Regarding the bank's capital, Abe acknowledged previous challenges stemming from delayed loan repayments, particularly concerning large-scale projects, which adversely affected the bank's balance sheet. However, he emphasized that concerted efforts have been made to rectify this situation, adding the government's significant intervention in providing the CBE with a 900 billion Birr bond to bolster its capital.

This measure has increased the bank's capital by over 50 percent of its previous level, he elaborated.

Furthermore, following the macroeconomic reforms, the bank anticipates receiving 650 million USD in support from the World Bank, which will significantly contribute to strengthening its capital position and overall capacity.

The macroeconomic reform policy plays a paramount role in taking the country's economy to new frontiers in the shortest possible time. In the present climate, the reform has been unfolding in the length and breadth of the country at the earliest possible juncture.

Apart from boosting competitiveness and resolving predicaments circling around foreign exchange shortages, the macroeconomic reform plays a paramount role in taking the country to whole new level.

Following the newly executed macroeconomic reform, Ethiopia's economy has been moving forward in the right direction and attaining the intended target. It is generally recognized that since the execution of the macroeconomic reforms, pleasing results have been observed in various sectors within a short period.

If the whole thing on the subject of the implementation of the macroeconomic reform policy keeps going in the same path, Ethiopia in the shortest possible time will end up achieving the purchased objective.

# Art & Culture

## Film uncovering Africa's untold history, correcting the narrative

BY MEKDES TAYE (PhD)

It is common knowledge that Africa is the land of diverse cultures and identities. These cultures have their own unique colors and indigenous knowledge, which have developed over time as people have been creating and using these practices for years.

After the outbreak of colonialism, the history and contributions that the region offered to the globe started to be narrated with bias. It became the Europeans who took the space to explain and narrate the stories of the African people in a way they wanted.

Africans were ignored or influenced to conceal the real identity and history of Africa. The curriculum, language, culture, history, and all African marking aspects of the region were dominated by the whites. Thus, the picture of the continent was forced to rely on white narration, which was made based on their intentions and interests.

Scholars strongly emphasize that this domination and lion's share were possibly taken using the cultural and sociological pillars of society. It is evident that the identity, philosophy, reality, and even wishes of the given society are exhibited in the socio-cultural space of the society, and the showcase is the art and culture itself.

Art, which bridges society with every aspect of human activities and aspirations, is used as the best key to input the targeted goal of the user or narrator to the given nation softly.

Since the narrators were Europeans, African identity and the historical facts done by these people were denied for centuries. This means the narration had been done for the benefit and goals of Europeans, even though the solid facts were already there. In this regard, Dr. Frederick Golooba, a lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Anthropology in Uganda, said that the African narration is biased and the globe pictured the continent as a degraded and exempted region characterized by war, starvation, famine, and the like. But the reality is far from these perceptions and understandings.

Thus, the basic question to ask as an African citizen is, "Who is telling Africa's story?" Frederick believed that since academics and the international media are well-funded, they have the capacity to address every nation on the continent. Most African educational curriculums are designed from the perspective and reality of Europeans themselves. Thus, in order to change the curriculum, the continent needs money, this is a frustrating threat.

The international media, which



dominantly addressed the story of Africa in the mentioned gloomy way, continues to dominate the globe since it is highly funded, which is, again, another version of colonialism, as the scholar said in the conference. Thus, economic insufficiency is a root cause for Africans to take the space and tell their stories in various ways, making it mandatory to seek information generated by outsiders about the countries of Africa.

Arthur Asimwe, Director General of Rwanda Broadcasting Agency, said that though the impact of media and academics is huge, the narration of the continent can also be corrected, and the right version of the generation's narration can be made using art and culture. He said that Africa has the potential and the chance to use this industry to narrate the history and story of the people of the continent.

As he said, it is only Nigeria that is using this potential and getting the reward exceedingly. In that industry, beyond the economic significance, the country is alerting the globe about its real identity and history in many ways. Since this form of art is catchy, it has the power to change the predisposed wrong narration about the people of the country and the continent too.

The director added that this industry is quite relevant for negotiating the encoded message more than other means. Thus, if countries give attention to the area and work on it exhaustively, the narration of the real Africa could explode out the previous one and take its rightful place.

After independence, the continent has been facing various challenges that hinder it from looking back to its issues and standing by itself independently. But these days, the highest focus and interest of the people are

to get back to their own roots and revisit their history and culture. Since art is the mirror that enables the people to look at themselves, various artistic genres are progressively being done on the mentioned issue.

The Ethiopian legendary filmmaker Haile Gerima is the best example in this topic. The films that he mostly wrote and produced centered on the indigenous identities and cultures of the people from which they originate. The Amharic film called 'Teza' vividly showcased Ethiopian culture and the psychological makeup of society.

Experts agreed that the setting, language, characterization, and artistic efficacy were perfectly created, lifting the film industry one step ahead. The DNC TV host referred to Haile as the "cinematic voice of our time," following his most flattering and brilliant work called 'Sankofa'. This film primarily echoes the history and the resistance of black Africans.

In an interview with DNC TV, Haile mentioned that the film was made after a 20-year research study on the history and resistance of Africans during the slave trade. It amplifies the worthiness of black Africans' resistance towards slavery and the significant history they made in the construction of the United States of America. This film is a reaction to the wrongly documented and narrated history of Africans.

African history is often found and told as the history of slavery, but Haile produced this film to tell the truth. Research showed that Africans contributed significantly to the building of the American nation, giving them an equal share in claiming their identity. The essence of the film shows that when the history and resistance of Africans

are told this way, it gives ownership to Africans and enables them to feel proud to live in America.

As the filmmaker said, the prodigious history and resistance of Africans were hidden and wrongly narrated by others. He said, "African Americans were resisting slavery since day one, but their resistance and history were suppressed." Thus, this film is meant to tell the truth artistically.

The quality and substance of the film were admired by experts. Ellis Mitchell, for instance, said, "It is a brilliant film by one of the prominent figures in 21<sup>st</sup>-century filmmaking." The film depicts the untold history and resistance of African people in America.

Another film written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie called 'Half of a Yellow Sun' addresses identity, love, and resilience in the midst of war. It vividly portrays the lasting effects of colonialism on the lives and identities of Nigerians, showcasing the passion, commitment, and solidarity of the Nigerian people. It has the power to view the historical patriotism and history of the Nigerian people.

As a form of soft power and a timely demanding subject, the narration of Africans and their hidden history and identity can be persuasively addressed through the assets of Africans themselves. The continent is very rich in its oral literature, which is a basic necessity for film production.

Therefore, the commitment and interest of countries in the field are crucial in altering the industry and shifting the narration that has been abused by others. It is in the hands of Africans to stand up and commit to shifting the narration using the film industry.

# Indepth

## Making the case for Ethiopia's quest for sea outlet

BY STAFF REPORTER

Ethiopia has long grappled with the challenge of lacking direct access to the sea. This geographic constraint has far-reaching implications for its economy, geopolitics, and national development. Since recently, Ethiopia has been engaged in a multifaceted quest to mitigate the consequences of its landlocked status and secure alternative avenues for maritime trade. This pursuit is deeply intertwined with regional politics, infrastructure development, and international partnerships.

Ethiopia's dependence on Djibouti has fostered a unique relationship between the two countries, characterized by economic interdependence and infrastructure collaboration. Ethiopia has invested heavily in transportation networks, such as the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway, a modern electrified rail line designed to facilitate efficient cargo movement between Addis Ababa and Djibouti's ports. This railway, completed in 2018, is a testament to Ethiopia's determination to secure reliable trade routes. Additionally, Ethiopia has engaged in agreements with Djibouti to manage joint logistics facilities and develop industrial parks near the ports, further integrating the two nations' economies.

While Djibouti remains Ethiopia's primary outlet to the sea, Addis Ababa has explored alternative routes to diversify its access and reduce over-reliance on a single partner. One notable example is Ethiopia's burgeoning partnership with Sudan. The Port of Sudan, situated along the Red Sea, offers a potential alternative for Ethiopian trade. To this end, Ethiopia has signed agreements with Sudan to improve road and rail connectivity and facilitate the smooth movement of goods. However, political instability in Sudan, including ongoing internal conflicts and leadership changes, has limited the effectiveness of this route.

The country has also turned its attention to regional initiatives aimed at enhancing collective economic integration. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), for instance, presents an opportunity for Ethiopia to collaborate with neighboring countries in developing transnational infrastructure and reducing trade barriers. By leveraging regional frameworks, Ethiopia seeks not only to improve its own access to the sea but also to contribute to broader economic growth and stability in the Horn of Africa.

The quest for sea access is not merely a logistical challenge but also a matter of economic sovereignty and strategic autonomy. Ethiopia, with its population of over 120 million people, is one of Africa's fastest-growing economies. The lack of direct sea access has inflated transportation costs, hindered export competitiveness, and complicated the importation of essential goods. To counter these challenges, Ethiopia has prioritized infrastructure development, including



**The quest for sea access is not merely a logistical challenge but also a matter of economic sovereignty and strategic autonomy**

road networks, dry ports, and logistics hubs. These investments aim to streamline trade processes and reduce dependency on external actors.

In recent years, Ethiopia has sought to acquire stakes in foreign ports to secure guaranteed access and influence over maritime operations. This strategy aligns with the broader trend of landlocked countries investing in coastal infrastructure to overcome geographic disadvantages. For example, Ethiopia has purchased shares in Djibouti's port facilities and signed agreements to invest in Lamu Port in Kenya. These investments reflect Ethiopia's proactive approach to securing long-term solutions to its sea access dilemma.

The diplomatic dimension of Ethiopia's quest for sea access cannot be understated. Regional politics in the Horn of Africa are often shaped by competing interests, historical grievances, and overlapping territorial claims. Ethiopia's relationships with its neighbors—particularly Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan—are critical in determining the success of its maritime ambitions.

In addition to regional partnerships, Ethiopia has engaged with international actors to support its sea access initiatives. Major global powers, including China, the United States, and the European Union, have vested interests in the stability and economic development of the Horn of Africa. China, in particular, has played a significant role through its Belt and Road Initiative, funding key infrastructure projects such as the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway and road networks. These collaborations underscore the geopolitical significance of Ethiopia's quest for sea access, as it intersects with global strategic interests in one of the world's most vital maritime corridors.

Despite its efforts, Ethiopia faces numerous challenges in its pursuit of maritime access. Political instability and conflict in the Horn of Africa often disrupt regional cooperation and infrastructure projects. Furthermore, Ethiopia's ambitious infrastructure projects

require substantial financial resources, which pose a burden on the national budget and increase external debt levels.

Environmental factors also play a role in Ethiopia's quest for sea access. Climate change and ecological degradation are reshaping the economic landscape of the Horn of Africa, affecting agricultural production, water resources, and transportation infrastructure. Rising sea levels and extreme weather events threaten coastal facilities, while desertification and drought impact inland connectivity. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates environmental sustainability into infrastructure planning and regional cooperation.

Ethiopia's pursuit of sea access has implications beyond its borders, influencing the broader dynamics of the Horn of Africa. The region's stability and economic development depend on fostering cooperative relationships among neighboring countries. Initiatives such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration on shared challenges, including trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and conflict resolution. By engaging in regional mechanisms, Ethiopia can contribute to building a more integrated and prosperous Horn of Africa.

The question of Ethiopia's sea access is also deeply rooted in its historical identity and national aspirations. As one of the oldest nations in the world, Ethiopia has a rich heritage of resilience and self-reliance. The loss of its coastline in 1993 was not only a geographic setback but also a symbolic challenge to its sovereignty. The country's ongoing efforts to regain access to the sea reflect its determination to assert its place in the global economy and uphold its legacy as a leading nation in Africa.

Looking to the future, Ethiopia's quest for sea access will likely continue to evolve in response to changing regional and global dynamics. The rise of new technologies, such as digital trade platforms and renewable energy infrastructure, offers opportunities to enhance trade efficiency and reduce environmental impacts. Moreover, the continued expansion of regional trade blocs and economic corridors could provide Ethiopia with additional avenues to address its landlocked status.

Ultimately, Ethiopia's sea access quest is a multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. By balancing investments in infrastructure, fostering regional partnerships, and engaging with international stakeholders, Ethiopia can navigate the complexities of its geographic constraints and unlock new opportunities for growth and development. The nation's resilience and strategic vision will be critical in shaping its path forward, ensuring that it remains a vital player in the interconnected world of global trade and geopolitics.



# Law & Politics

## Deepening military partnership for collective security

BY FIKADU BELAY

Ethiopia, a key player in the Horn of Africa, is actively enhancing its military alliances with neighboring countries like Uganda, Kenya, and other African nations. This collaboration highlights the growing recognition that ensuring regional security is a collective responsibility, especially in a continent facing ongoing threats such as terrorism, armed conflicts, and cross-border instability. Ethiopia's strategic partnerships reflect a broader commitment to fostering peace, stability, and mutual development across the region.

Historically, Ethiopia has been crucial in promoting regional stability and peace. As one of Africa's oldest nations and a significant contributor to the African Union, headquartered in Addis Ababa, the country has consistently demonstrated its dedication to continental peace initiatives. Its geographic position, combined with its strong military capabilities, makes Ethiopia an essential ally in security efforts across the region.

The military cooperation between Ethiopia and Uganda has deepened recently, with both nations engaging in training programs and expertise exchanges. This collaboration allows them to share best practices and enhance their operational capabilities, building resilient and adaptable military forces.

Ethiopia's extensive experience in peacekeeping missions and counter-insurgency operations has been invaluable to Uganda, while Uganda's expertise in guerrilla warfare and regional diplomacy has enriched Ethiopia's strategies. This mutual support has strengthened both nations' abilities to tackle regional crises effectively.

Kenya is another vital partner for Ethiopia, particularly in the context of regional security. The two countries share a long and sometimes contentious border, which has necessitated extensive cooperation to address issues like the movement of armed groups, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms. Both Ethiopia and Kenya have recognized that their shared prosperity is intimately tied to the stability of their border region, leading to increased collaboration in military and security matters.

The Ethiopia, Kenya partnership is particularly evident in their joint efforts against extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab. As frontline states in combating this threat, both nations have contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and engaged in intelligence sharing to disrupt terrorist



networks.

The porous borders between Kenya and Somalia have long posed security risks, making Ethiopia's military expertise crucial in supporting Kenya's efforts to mitigate these threats. Joint military exercises and capacity-building initiatives have further enhanced the interoperability of Ethiopian and Kenyan forces, enabling them to operate cohesively in addressing shared security challenges.

Both countries understand that terrorism knows no borders and demands coordinated action. Additionally, cross-border trafficking of people and goods undermines regional stability and fuels organized crime. Despite occasional disputes, Ethiopia and Kenya have maintained a peaceful coexistence and coordinated efforts that have weakened extremist groups' operational capacities, although challenges remain.

Ethiopia and Tanzania are forging a robust partnership in defense cooperation, focusing on enhancing military capacity building and technology transfer. It aims not only to bolster their respective military capabilities but also to address and resolve the unique challenges each nation faces. By working together, Ethiopia and Tanzania are demonstrating their commitment to regional stability and international security.

Similarly, Ethiopia has established a strong political alliance with Algeria, engaging in both bilateral and multilateral initiatives. This partnership underscores the significance of military diplomacy, as both nations recognize the need to fortify their defense relations.

By deepening cooperation in military matters, Ethiopia and Algeria aim to enhance their strategic positioning on the African continent and address common security concerns. Strengthening these

ties is essential for promoting peace, stability, and development in the region, ultimately benefiting both countries and their populations.

On the other way, Ethiopia's strong military cooperation extends beyond its immediate neighbors. Partnerships with Nigeria and other countries are viewed as essential for fostering African integration. Both nations face similar security challenges and recognize the importance of deepening their collaboration across various sectors.

This alliance is vital not only for Ethiopia and Nigeria but also for promoting broader peace across Africa as they confront threats like Boko Haram, organized crime, and human trafficking, all of which hinder the continent's stability and economic growth. Their collaboration serves as a model for regional cooperation, demonstrating the effectiveness of partnerships in addressing complex issues.

Moreover, Ethiopia and South Africa are striving to enhance their bilateral relations within the BRICS framework. Ethiopia is prioritizing collaboration with other BRICS nations and engaging with peer institutions to foster mutual support. Key discussions have focused on establishing partnerships between private enterprises and social development organizations, thereby strengthening ties among BRICS members.

Overall, the Joint military exercises and intelligence-sharing agreements between Ethiopia and its partners have significantly enhanced their readiness to address security threats. By combining military strength, intelligence resources, and development initiatives, these nations are tackling immediate security concerns while laying the groundwork for lasting peace and prosperity. Their collaborative efforts serve as a blueprint for other African nations,

illustrating how unity and resilience can overcome daunting challenges.

Additionally, military cooperation has proven effective in enhancing personnel skills, promoting human security, and creating conditions conducive to transitioning societies back to peaceful and stable structures. Ethiopia's military, with its extensive experience operating in diverse terrains, has become a preferred partner for many nations seeking to bolster their defense capabilities.

These military alliances are instrumental in empowering nations to protect themselves, strengthen ties with allies, and manage conflicts more effectively. By providing essential equipment, military personnel, and necessary resources, these partnerships enable countries to defend themselves against common threats.

Through bilateral and multilateral partnerships, Ethiopia plays a pivotal role in promoting peace and stability across the continent. Despite facing internal and external challenges, Ethiopia remains committed to fostering solidarity and mutual development. Through joint initiatives, intelligence sharing, and capacity building, Ethiopia and its allies are working toward a more secure and prosperous future for the region.

The spirit of cooperation among African nations not only enhances their resilience but also reinforces the principle that regional security is a shared responsibility. Achieving this requires unity, collaboration, and a long-term vision.

As Ethiopia continues to build military alliances across the continent, it is setting a precedent for how countries can work together to address common challenges, ultimately contributing to a more secure and stable Africa for future generations.

# Women in Focus



## Overcoming ill-thoughts against women

BY MEKDES TAYE (PHD)

Narratives are basically created and disseminated by societies on some issues that are commonly the concerns of that specific society. Since narratives require the willingness, readiness, effort and cooperation of the society, they take times to get through the community. Narratives are made on the concerns of the community; therefore, everyone in the group has an interest on the raised subject. Hence, they attract the attention of the community to have the same stand on the narrative. Though in most cases narratives are used to convey negative implications about a particular subject, there are also positive narratives aimed at strengthening social cohesion, urge the society to do more and be cooperative on many issues.

Positive narratives can be seen in nation-building process instilling a sense of patriotism. On the other hand, negative narratives are very destructive; affecting the passion and even identity of a given nation or segment of the society. Since they are said or acted massively, their influence is very huge. Among the various types of negative narratives, those targeting women take the dominant place, particularly in Africa.

Negative and positive narratives can be exhibited in certain forms of language and style. In a given language the proverbs, folktales, metaphors, and the dictions themselves could be deliberately modified and altered to affect targeted society or individual negatively or positively.

In Africa, there have been numerous expressions that were used purposely to mark the inferiority and incapability of women. For example:

*A woman is not sent to collect a debt (Kenyan)*

*Who follows a woman plan will draw himself (Senegal)*

*Should I believe a woman? Better ally myself with death (Benin)*

*If friendship includes the wife it will perish (Cameroon)*

*A mother of only daughters does not laugh in*

*front of others (Rwanda)*

These and other more expressions transcended and persisted for generations. However, these days, they have become narratives that are less pronounced by the people as African women are progressively taking positions which were once reserved for men. History has recorded the increasing presence of number of prominent women in leadership positions including in politics and other professions.

The 2024 Africa's Soft Power Summit 2024 was held in Uganda. At the Summit, experienced women leaders were invited to the podium to share their experiences. Moderator of the Summit stated the leading gist of the Summit. "In African culture, the power of women creativity, innovation and intellectual prowess represents an invaluable asset in shaping global narratives, influencing international relations and driving sustainable development." In this statement, it is seen that currently African women are acting beyond the deep-rooted negative narratives and the globe is seeing the reverse output.

These days, the very untouched positions of politics are becoming the favorite spaces taken by women. Africa had started viewing effective women leaders in various political positions. A participant in the Summit said, "I think an opportunity that a woman has to really unleash her own potential is the best story to tell other women that it is possible."

The long attached negative narratives aimed at letting the women stay at home, take-care of the family members and perform household chores. This was functional for a longer period in the continent's history. Thus, when the women started to break this shell and shine out as her counterpart, she need to equally inspire other women that it is possible to crack the shell, free herself from the barriers and can do as males do. In this process the participants of the Summit said that the women need to look for the available mechanisms that help them exalt the desolation carefully.

In the stage former president of Malawi, Joyce Banda, was the icebreaker of the discussion. She believed that African women can lead even more effectively than their counterparts. She argued that it is up to the commitment and cautiousness of the women. Women have the

capacity and they have efficacy for exhibiting themselves in various spaces. The key is in the hands of the women themselves. She said, "You must decide it is a deliberate move. You must do something about yourself to make sure that you live an extraordinary life."

The former Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde reflected the same idea at the stage which was coordinated by IGHE. She said that in Ethiopia the involvement of women was too limited due to various factors related to patriarchy. However, the year 2018 was the turning point regarding women issues. She said, "What has happened in Ethiopia was a miracle ... the work has just started... women are starting to grow under the ladder. In Ethiopia there is a door of opportunity that has opened; the owner is us."

Joyce Banda argued that women can lead even better if they remain calm and firm. She said, "You must know what belongs to you and not give up. You must take it but you must move very cautiously because they can just shoot you out and you may lose."

The leaders commonly underlined that the walk to any space in the continent is not a simple task. But women should overcome the challenges. For Sahle-work "the challenges are the mindsets." She reflected that the women themselves need to look in to themselves and empower themselves. Then when they start acting, the negative narratives will simply be fabrication.

Since 2018, an increasing number of women have started taking various spaces. She reminded that more than half of the cabinet was taken by women representatives. The two former presidents strongly believed that African women have the potential to serve more on any space. Sahle-work said, "We women can show that we can deliver and we can also deliver differently."

Joyce Banda advised African women who are at any competitive positions that falling could be faced by any women. At such moment women need be smart in handling the context. "When you fall imagine that you have fallen in the middle of the road. You have to wake up very quickly. This life is about move on. This life is about falling up and starting all over again," she added.

Participants of the Summit, particularly the former presidents, also highlighted the importance of cooperation among women. Joyce put this the following way: "When you go up the ladder, get to the top, and don't push the ladder. Leave it there so that others can also climb on it."

This sentiment was also echoed by King Nea Achebe, a traditional ruler at the Summit, who stressed the need for a shift in mindset and legislation.

These prominent women leaders that portrayed their efficacy practically have many implications. The deep-rooted narratives can simply dispel its exhibition. This is possible since the coming generation better followed the practice than words. In this regard Blen Salihu, women right activist and lawyer on advocacy council for legal reform in Ethiopia, believed that the appointment of the woman as president has a greater impact on the coming generation. "Young women see that women are trusted with some of the toughest tasks in the country. This is huge. It matters a lot. For a young woman grown up saying, 'I could become a president or may be a prime minister, or mayor. And it could become normal for people to say, 'we need more women in this board room, legal counsel etc. this going to have a lasting impact.

Since women constitute half of the given society the issue of their inclusion and participation had been a hot agenda for many years. International, national and community level organizations and associations raise the issue of women to be their core target to achieve sustainable transformation in the continent. The African Union took women issue as its basic agenda aiming for substantial progress by 2023. In that it clearly proposes that women equality and participation could be improved for equal share at the mentioned year. This plan is possibly achieved with the enactment of rules and regulations. These enactments can be influential if they are examined in certain sectors like educational curriculums. With the support of governments' commitment and dedications, African women can exhibit their potential, practically overcoming long-attached negative narratives at the end of the day contributing their share to the continent's transformation.

## Society

# Strengthening nation's vaccine production, supply capacity

BY MENGISTEAB TESHOME

In April 2024 an article titled “Perspectives on the Performance of the Ethiopian Vaccine Supply Chain and Logistics System after the Last Mile Delivery Initiative: A Phenomenological Study,” was published by a group of health professionals. The piece emphasizes that vaccination is among the most cost-effective public health measures.

Vaccines prevent nearly 4.5 million deaths annually and yield an impressive economic return of 26 USD for every dollar spent on immunization. However, globally, 18.2 million children remain unvaccinated, and 25 million are under-vaccinated. Alarmingly, just ten countries, including Ethiopia, account for over 60 percent of the global zero-dose burden. In Ethiopia alone, approximately 30 percent of infants—more than a million children—are unvaccinated.

To this end and support every child to get immunized, an uninterrupted supply of vaccines is crucial for the success of any immunization program. However, in many countries, the vaccine supply chain and logistics system (VSCLS) has often been overlooked for various reasons. The inefficiency of these logistics systems significantly hampers efforts to achieve high vaccination coverage in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

According to documents, the VSCLS encompasses the entire process of vaccine acquisition, storage, distribution from national hubs to service delivery points, waste management, and timely resupply requests. To function effectively, a VSCLS needs a strong infrastructure, skilled human capital, and appropriate technologies.

In view of this, recently, the Immunization Agenda 2030 and the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) 5.0 strategies have recognized efficient VSCLSs as a global priority, emphasizing the goal of leaving no one behind in immunization efforts.

Health science experts recommend that countries to enhance their self-sufficiency in vaccine production to strengthen their supply chains. According to them, this approach could alleviate bottlenecks and foster healthier communities.

As part of this effort, in Ethiopia, developing a robust vaccine production system is of critical importance for improving public health, achieving economic stability, and ensuring self-reliance. Ongoing investment and collaboration will be an essential drive to maintain this progress and effectively address future health challenges, in this regard.

Local vaccine production can lessen reliance on imports, providing a more reliable supply chain, particularly during



global health crises. Establishing a domestic vaccine industry promotes research and development, stimulating innovation in biotechnology and related sectors. By producing vaccines locally, communities can enhance their resilience and responsiveness to health challenges.

In view of this and to address the significant vaccine shortages that many countries face, the Ministry of Health has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian biotech consulting company, TechInvention Lifecare Pvt. Ltd., to conduct a feasibility study to embark on manufacturing of vaccines in Ethiopia.

This initiative comes in light of the significant vaccine shortages many countries faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking on the occasion, Health Minister Mekdes Daba (MD) stated that the signing of the MoU is a major step towards Ethiopia's domestic vaccine manufacturing.

According to her, following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, there is a huge pushing factor for African countries to embark on manufacturing of vaccines in their own capacity and they have committed to producing vaccines independently. This MoU is a major forward move for those nations to produce vaccines in their own

capacity.

Dr. Mekdes highlighted that domestic vaccine production is crucial for ensuring public health in Ethiopia and preparing for future epidemics. She mentioned that Ethiopia has met international vaccine quality standards and aims not only to meet local demand but also to supply vaccines to other African countries and beyond.

Stating that in recent months, preparations have been underway to initiate construction and production processes. Dr. Mekdes affirmed that the Ministry of Health will fully support the Indian Tech Innovation Lifecare Company, which has been selected to provide consultancy and design research for this project.

The Director and CEO of Tech Innovation Life-Care Company, Sayed S. Ahmed on his part expressed his confidence that Ethiopia to become a vaccine producing country in the coming months. He said that his company will properly complete and submit the study in a short time.

At the signing ceremony, it was stated that the Ministry of Health's technical team will closely monitor and support the research team as they begin vaccine production.

The MoU was signed by Ethiopia's Minister of Health, Mekdes Daba (MD), and Director

and CEO of TechInvention Lifecare, Syed S Ahmed, at the Minister's office, MoH reported. Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer of Medicines, Medical Devices and Facilities with the Ministry of Health also held discussions with the Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Pharmaceuticals Supply Service (EPSS) on ways to strengthen the national vaccine supply chain system. Issues related to the challenges faced and solutions were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General of the Ethiopian Pharmaceuticals Supply Service, Tariku Belachew, mentioned that medicines and vaccines are being delivered to areas with security problems using various options and he urged partner organizations to cooperate in delivering medicines and vaccines to these areas.

Mentioning that children under the age of five should receive vaccines and emphasized that those who have not yet been immunized should get vaccinated, the Director General urged all parties to work diligently to ensure this.

Mothers, Children and Adolescent Vaccination Desk Representative Yohannes Lakew on his part stated the main focus of his office. “In addition to the regular vaccinations, there is a plan to introduce malaria, yellow fever and Hepatitis B vaccines and our main focus and aim is to deliver the vaccine to the health facility without interruption,” he added.

Head of the Medicines and Medical Resources Management Desk and Leading Executive Representative at the Ministry of Health Birhanu Tadesse emphasized the importance of strengthening the national vaccine supply chain system. He noted that vaccines must be properly transported and stored to maintain their therapeutic quality until they reach the community.

At the discussion forum, leaders and experts from the Ministry of Health and drug providers, partner organizations participated and discussed focusing on vaccines' supply chain.



## Published Weekly in Collaboration with Haramaya University



### HU's climate-resilient forage for improved livestock production

BY DIRRIBA TESHOME

Haramaya University (HU), Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) jointly organized Farmers' Field Day at Ifa Oromia Farmers Training Center (IO FTC) recently.

The field day brought together farmers, researchers, and officials from HU, Maya City, and EIAR. It also enhanced the understanding of the participants on the advanced agricultural technologies, emphasizing the integration of productive and resilient forage grasses into farming systems to improve livestock production and to augment climate resilience.

HU Vice President for Administration and Development, Abdi Mohammed (PhD), reiterated the university's dedication to serving the community through laborious research, knowledge dissemination, and the provision of demand-driven community services.

"This field day aligns perfectly with our mission to introduce and disseminate agricultural technologies to local communities, supporting the government's initiatives to enhance livestock productivity and improve nutrition security," he emphasized.

In the same way, HU academic colleague and Coordinator of Climate-resilient Forage for Improved Livestock Production, Dargo Kebede explained:

"This project aims to enhance the availability and accessibility of livestock feed, ultimately increasing livestock productivity in the target areas of Maya City, Kersa, and Kombolcha."

This initiative is the result of collaboration between Haramaya University, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). It emphasizes the production and use of lime grass as a key element in improving livestock feeding practices, he noted.

By the same token, HU Community Engagement and Industry Linkage Directorate Director, Kemal Kasim, specified: "Recognizing the critical importance of animal feed production, Haramaya University remains

committed to making improved fodder varieties readily available to farmers."

The event provided a platform for knowledge sharing, with researchers and model farmers demonstrating the benefits of improved forage grasses. The farmers who took part on the field expressed enthusiasm, recognizing the potential of these grasses to improve animal fattening and overall production.

They expressed gratitude for the university's ongoing support in bringing new technologies to the forefront and expressed hope for continued collaboration in advancing agricultural innovation, as reported by Haramaya University Public and International Relations Directorate.